

**FOOD-SECURITY/HUNGER CORE MODULE:
3-STAGE DESIGN, WITH SCREENERS
USDA, Food and Nutrition Service and Economic Research Service – 6/23/99**

Transition into Module (administered to all households): These next questions are about the food eaten in your household in the last 12 months, since (current month) of last year and whether you were able to afford the food you need.

USDA Food Sufficiency Question/Screeners: Questions 1, 1a, 1b (Optional, these questions are not used to calculate the food-security/hunger scale. Question 1 may be used in conjunction with income as a preliminary screener to reduce respondent burden for high income households).

1. [IF ONE PERSON IN HOUSEHOLD, USE "I" IN PARENTHETICALS, OTHERWISE, USE "WE."]

Which of these statements best describes the food eaten in your household in the last 12 months: --enough of the kinds of food (I/we) want to eat; --enough, but not always the kinds of food (I/we) want; --sometimes not enough to eat; or, --often not enough to eat?

- [1] Enough of the kinds of food we want to eat (SKIP 1a and 1b)
- [2] Enough but not always the kinds of food we want (SKIP 1a)
- [3] Sometimes not enough to eat [SKIP 1b]
- [4] Often not enough [SKIP 1b]
- [] DK or Refused (SKIP 1a and 1b)

- 1a. [IF OPTION 3 OR 4 SELECTED, ASK] Here are some reasons why people don't always have enough to eat. For each one, please tell me if that is a reason why YOU don't always have enough to eat. [READ LIST. MARK ALL THAT APPLY.]

YES	NO	DK	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not enough money for food
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not enough time for shopping or cooking
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Too hard to get to the store
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	On a diet
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No working stove available
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not able to cook or eat because of health problems

- 1b. [IF OPTION 2 SELECTED, ASK] Here are some reasons why people don't always have the quality or variety of food they want. For each one, please tell me if that is a reason why YOU don't always have the kinds of food you want to eat. [READ LIST. MARK ALL THAT APPLY.]

YES	NO	DK	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not enough money for food
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Kinds of food (I/we) want not available
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not enough time for shopping or cooking
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Too hard to get to the store
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	On a special diet

Stage 1: Questions 2-6 (asked of all households; begin scale items).

[IF SINGLE ADULT IN HOUSEHOLD, USE "I," "MY," AND "YOU" IN PARENTHESES; OTHERWISE, USE "WE," "OUR," AND "YOUR HOUSEHOLD."]

2. Now I'm going to read you several statements that people have made about their food situation. For these statements, please tell me whether the statement was often true, sometimes true, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months, that is, since last (name of current month).

The first statement is "(I/We) worried whether (my/our) food would run out before (I/we) got money to buy more." Was that often true, sometimes true, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months?

- ☐ Often true
- ☐ Sometimes true
- ☐ Never true
- ☐ DK or Refused

3. "The food that (I/we) bought just didn't last, and (I/we) didn't have money to get more." Was that often, sometimes, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months?

- ☐ Often true
- ☐ Sometimes true
- ☐ Never true
- ☐ DK or Refused

4. "(I/we) couldn't afford to eat balanced meals." Was that often, sometimes, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months?

- ☐ Often true
- ☐ Sometimes true
- ☐ Never true
- ☐ DK or Refused

[IF CHILDREN UNDER 18 IN HOUSEHOLD, ASK Q5 - 6; OTHERWISE SKIP TO 1st-Level Screen.]

5. "(I/we) relied on only a few kinds of low-cost food to feed (my/our) child/the children) because (I was/we were) running out of money to buy food." Was that often, sometimes, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months?

- ☐ Often true
- ☐ Sometimes true
- ☐ Never true
- ☐ DK or Refused

6. "(I/We) couldn't feed (my/our) child/the children) a balanced meal, because (I/we)

couldn't afford that." Was that often, sometimes, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months?

- ☐ Often true
- ☐ Sometimes true
- ☐ Never true
- ☐ DK or Refused

1st-level Screen (screener for Stage 2): If affirmative response to any one of Questions 2-6 (i.e., "often true" or "sometimes true"), OR, response [3] or [4] to Question 1 (if administered), then continue to Stage 2; otherwise, skip to end.

Stage 2: Questions 7-11 (asked of hh's passing the 1st-level Screen: estimated 40% of hh's \leq 185% Poverty; 5.5% of hh's > 185% Poverty; 19% of all households).

[IF CHILDREN UNDER 18 IN HOUSEHOLD, ASK Q7; OTHERWISE SKIP TO Q8]

7. "(My/Our child was/The children were) not eating enough because (I/we) just couldn't afford enough food." Was that often, sometimes, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months?

- ☐ Often true
- ☐ Sometimes true
- ☐ Never true
- ☐ DK or Refused

8. In the last 12 months, since last (name of current month), did (you/you or other adults in your household) ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (Skip 8a)
- ☐ DK (Skip 8a)

- 8a. [IF YES ABOVE, ASK] How often did this happen---almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?

- ☐ Almost every month
- ☐ Some months but not every month
- ☐ Only 1 or 2 months
- ☐ DK

9. In the last 12 months, did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn't enough money to buy food?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ DK

10. In the last 12 months, were you every hungry but didn't eat because you couldn't afford enough food?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ DK

11. In the last 12 months, did you lose weight because you didn't have enough money for food?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ DK

2nd-level Screen (screener for Stage 3): If affirmative response to any one of Questions 7 through 11, then continue to Stage 3; otherwise, skip to end.

Stage 3: Questions 12-16 (asked of hh's passing the 2nd-level Screen: estimated 7-8% of hh's < 185% Poverty; 1-1.5% of hh's > 185% Poverty; 3-4% of all hh's).

12. In the last 12 months, did (you/you or other adults in your household) ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (Skip 12a)
- ☐ DK (Skip 12a)

12a. [IF YES ABOVE, ASK] How often did this happen---almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?

- ☐ Almost every month
- ☐ Some months but not every month
- ☐ Only 1 or 2 months
- ☐ DK

[IF CHILDREN UNDER 18 IN HOUSEHOLD, ASK 13-16; OTHERWISE SKIP TO END.]

13. The next questions are about children living in the household who are under 18 years old. In the last 12 months, since (current month) of last year, did you ever cut the size of (your child's/any of the children's) meals because there wasn't enough money for food?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ DK

14. In the last 12 months, did (CHILD'S NAME/any of the children) ever skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?

- ☐ Yes

☐ No (Skip 14a)

☐ DK (Skip 14a)

14a. [IF YES ABOVE ASK] How often did this happen---almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?

☐ Almost every month

☐ Some months but not every month

☐ Only 1 or 2 months

☐ DK

15. In the last 12 months, (was your child/ were the children) ever hungry but you just couldn't afford more food?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ DK

16. In the last 12 months, did (your child/any of the children) ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ DK

END OF FOOD-SECURITY/HUNGER CORE MODULE

User Notes

(1) Response Options: For interview surveys, DK (“don’t know”) and “Refused” are blind responses - that is, they are not presented as response options, but marked if volunteered. For self-administered surveys, DK is presented as a response option.

(2) Screeners: The two levels of screener are provided for survey designers wishing to reduce respondent burden for households not manifesting: (a) *any* level of food insecurity (1st-level screener); or (b) any signs of *hunger* (2nd-level screener).

To further reduce burden for higher-income respondents, a preliminary screener may be constructed using Q1 along with a household income measure. Households with income above twice the poverty threshold, AND who respond <1> to Q1 may be skipped to the end of the module and classified as food secure. Use of this preliminary screener reduces total burden in a survey with many higher-income household, and the cost, in terms of accuracy in identifying food insecure households, is not great. However, research has shown that a small proportion of the higher-income households screened out by this procedure will register food insecurity if administered the full module. If Q1 is not needed for research purposes, a preferred strategy is to omit Q1 and administer Stage 1 of the module to all households. Administration time for Stage 1 is very nearly the same as administration time for the preliminary USDA food sufficiency question/screener.

(3) 30-Day Reference Period: The questionnaire items may be modified to a 30-day reference period by changing the “last 12-month” references to “last 30 days.” In this case, items 8a, 12a, and 14a must be changed to read as follows:

8a/12a/14a [IF YES ABOVE, ASK] In the last 30 days, how many days did this happen?

_____ days

[] DK

(4) Food-Security/Hunger Scale: Questions 2-16 provide a complete, validated set of food-insecurity/hunger indicator variables for use in: (1) scaled measurement of the severity of household food insecurity and hunger; (2) classification of households by severity level of food insecurity and hunger; and (3) comparison of food-insecurity and hunger prevalence with national benchmark data. To request guidance materials for calculating these measures, contact the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Analysis, Nutrition, and Evaluation, Alexandria, VA (703-305-2125), or the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, Washington, DC (202-694-5433).